

# THE CLASSIFICATION OF PARK AND RECREATION FACILITIES AND PROGRAMS

## Introduction

San Antonio's parks are all unique in their location, size, and type of facilities. Likewise, the City's recreation programs vary widely by content, audience, and the place and time they are offered. When San Antonio's parks and recreation system was evolving in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, little thought was given to planning. Today, the parks system attests to this lack of foresight.

San Antonio's parks are found where 18<sup>th</sup> century Spanish colonists established them; where real estate developers sought to create green space for their subdivisions regardless of adjoining areas; where individuals were able to donate and/or sell unwanted land to the City; and where parks were located for political expediency. Few of San Antonio's existing parks were located based purely on the needs of its citizens.

Today, however, it is important to analyze San Antonio's existing or proposed park and recreation facilities and programs to determine how they do (or can) address specific community needs. The nature of each facility and program must be studied to analyze if it is achieving its potential. Are facilities suited to the community's needs and are they receiving maximum use? Are programs designed to meet specific community needs and are they reaching the maximum target audience?

## PARK CLASSIFICATIONS

To assist with this analysis, a list of park classifications was developed that describes the key features of each type of park. Each existing park is assigned to one classification according to its predominant characteristics. It is recognized, however, that a park may have characteristics of one or more other classifications. The classification of existing parks is found in the city-wide park inventory (see Appendix C), as well as in each park planning subarea inventory.

An estimated cost range for developing traditional park types has been established. This cost will vary depending on the types of facilities included in the park-- decisions that are based on site constraints, budget, and community input. These cost ranges are stated in the following section and detailed breakdowns are found in Appendix H.

## **NEIGHBORHOOD PARK (NP)**

### **Definition**

Neighborhood parks are the basic unit of a park system, and are recreational and social centers for those living in the nearby service area. Neighborhood parks are not intended to be used for programmed activities that attract city-wide users and that may result in overuse, noise, parking problems, and congestion. It is important for these parks to be easily accessible from throughout the neighborhood area, and for particular attention to be paid to non-vehicular access. Trails or sidewalks and low-volume streets may all be used to provide access. Playgrounds are usually a high priority. Restroom facilities for users are not normally included because of access to home by users. Off-street parking should be minimal. Park lighting should be primarily for safety and security.

### **Recommended Size**

- Generally range in size from 3 acres to 10 acres.

### **Recommended Uses**

- Neighborhood parks should balance active and passive uses as appropriate.
- Active use facilities include play structures, game courts and informal play fields.
- Passive use facilities include trails, picnic areas, shelters, and conservation/ornamentation areas.

### **Basic Facilities Menu**

The cost of developing a typical neighborhood park may range from \$100,000 to \$325,000. Costs are dependent on existing site conditions and level of development as determined with community input. A typical neighborhood park may include one or more, but rarely all, of the following amenities.

- Playground
- Basketball/Multi-use Court
- Park toilet
- Informal play fields/open space
- Trail
- Utilities
- Parking/access control
- Park furnishings
- Landscaping

## COMMUNITY PARK (CP)

### Definition

A community park meets the recreational needs of several neighborhoods and may also preserve unique landscapes and open spaces. These parks accommodate group activities and recreational facilities that are not provided in neighborhood parks. Community park sites should be accessible by arterial and collector streets. Restroom facilities and off-street parking for facility users should be considered. Park lighting should be for security and safety as well as facility use.

### Recommended Size

- While the optimal size for a community park is between 10 and 50 acres, acreage should be based on the land area needed to accommodate desired uses. Size may also vary with the demographic profile, population density, resource availability, and recreation demand within the service area.

### Recommended Uses

- Community parks should provide for both active and passive uses. Recreation centers, gymnasiums, and cultural activity facilities may be appropriate.
- Active use recreation facilities may include large play structures, game courts, formal ball fields, and swimming pools.
- Passive use recreation facilities may include trails, individual and group picnic areas, open recreation areas, and unique landscape features.

### Basic Facilities Menu

The cost of developing a typical community park may range from \$500,000 to \$4,000,000. Costs are dependent on existing site conditions and level of development as determined with community input. A typical community park may include one or more, but rarely all, of the following amenities.

- Large playground
- Basketball/multi-use court
- Park toilet
- Restroom
- Tennis court
- Volleyball court
- Youth athletic fields
- Swimming pool with bathhouse
- Trail
- Individual picnic facilities
- Group picnic facility
- Recreation center
- Utilities

- Parking/access control
- Park furnishings
- Landscaping

## **LARGE URBAN PARK (LUP)**

### **Definition**

Large urban parks supplement neighborhood and community parks, serving broader community-based recreation needs in addition to those addressed by neighborhood and community parks. These parks may include large areas of undeveloped land with natural vegetation and/or water features. Park location is determined by the size, quality, and suitability of available sites. Restroom facilities and off-street parking should be provided for facility users. Park lighting should be for security and safety as well as facility use.

### **Recommended Size**

- While the optimal size for a large urban park is over 50 acres, each park is unique. Park size should be based on acreage needed to accommodate desired uses as well as the demographic profile, population density, available resources, natural conditions, and recreation demand in the service area.

### **Recommended uses**

- In large urban parks, land is distributed between active and passive uses on a site-by-site basis.
- Active use recreation facilities may include large play structures, game courts, sports fields, and swimming pools.
- Passive use recreation facilities may include trails, individual and group picnic areas, open recreation areas, unique landscape features, and cultural events facilities.

### **Basic Facilities Menu**

The cost of developing a typical large urban park may range from \$1,000,000 to \$5,000,000. Costs are dependent on existing site conditions and level of development as determined with community input. A typical large urban park may include one or more, but rarely all, of the following amenities.

- Large playground
- Basketball/multi-use court
- Tennis courts
- Volleyball courts
- Sports fields
- Swimming pool with bathhouse
- Trail

- Trail lighting
- Individual picnic facilities
- Group picnic facility
- Restrooms
- Park toilet
- Allowance for unique landscape feature development
- Recreation center
- Utilities
- Roads, parking/access control
- Accessible walks
- Park furnishings
- Landscaping

## **SPORTS COMPLEX (SC)**

### **Definition**

Sports complexes consolidate programmed athletic fields and associated facilities at large sites strategically located throughout the community. Sports complexes, unlike neighborhood and community parks, are meant for city-wide use. These complexes should be located within reasonable driving distances of target populations, and adjacent to non-residential land uses. They relieve the negative impacts on smaller parks of over-use, noise, traffic congestion, and parking. Adequate spectator seating and parking should be provided. Lighting should be for security, safety, and facility use.

### **Recommended Size**

- The size of a sports complex is determined by projected need and programs and activities.

### **Recommended Uses**

- Facilities at sports complexes are determined by demographic profiles, age group populations, and participation rates, as well as program offerings and projected demands of user groups and athletic associations.
- Sports complex facilities may include ball fields, soccer and football fields, game courts, play structures, swimming pools, gymnasiums, aquatic facilities, sports stadiums, golf courses, tennis centers, multipurpose buildings, and appropriate support facilities.

### **Basic Facilities Menu**

The cost of developing a typical sports complex varies depending on facilities. Costs are dependent on existing site conditions and level of development as determined with community input. A sports complex typically includes one of the following amenities.

- Softball complex
- Soccer complex
- Tennis complex

- Athletic center building
- Natatorium
- Golf course
- Skate park

## **NATURAL AREA (NA)**

### **Definition**

Natural areas are areas established for the protection and stewardship of outstanding natural attributes of local, regional, and statewide significance, which may be used in a sustainable manner for scientific research, education, aesthetic enjoyment, and appropriate public use not detrimental to the primary purpose. Minimal infrastructure may include access, parking, signage and security lighting as appropriate.

### **Recommended Size**

- The size and location of natural areas are determined by significance, availability, and opportunity to conserve the resource.

### **Recommended Uses**

- These areas are resource rather than user-based, but some passive recreation opportunities such as nature study, hiking, and picnicking may be provided.
- Preservation of the resource integrity must guide development.

### **Basic Facilities Menu**

The cost of developing a typical natural area may range from \$10,000 to \$90,000. Costs are dependent on existing site conditions and level of development as determined with community input. A typical natural area may include one or more of the following amenities.

- Utilities
- Parking/access control
- Trail
- Park furnishings

## **GREENWAY (GW)**

### **Definition**

Greenways are linear features that emphasize harmony with the natural environment and allow safe, uninterrupted pedestrian movement along both natural or man-made corridors. They may follow suitable natural features such as rivers and creeks, but may also follow man-made corridors including revitalized waterways, drainage ways, utility easements, and abandoned railroad beds. Greenways may connect neighborhoods and/or natural landscape features and provide non-motorized transportation routes as well as recreation opportunities. Minimal infrastructure may include access, parking, signage, and security lighting as appropriate.

### **Recommended Size**

- Greenway width typically is a minimum of 200 feet. Location is determined by resource availability, linkage need, and opportunity of utilizing the resource.

### **Recommended Uses**

- Greenways can accommodate various modes of travel, notably hiking, walking, jogging, and bicycling.
- Greenways can provide passive recreation opportunities such as nature study, hiking, and picnicking.

### **Basic Facilities Menu**

The cost of developing a typical greenway may range from \$10,000 to \$125,000. Costs are dependent on existing site conditions and level of development as determined with community input. A typical greenway may include one or more of the following amenities.

- Trails
- Parking/Access control
- Park furnishings

## **HISTORIC RESOURCE (HR)**

### **Definition**

Historic resources are sites, structures, and buildings set aside to preserve and enhance their historic, cultural, and archaeological significance.

### **Recommended Size**

- The size and location of historic facilities are determined by resource availability and significance and opportunity of utilizing the resource.

### **Recommended Uses**

- The use of historic facilities is determined by the unique nature of each resource.
- Preservation of the resource must guide development.

#### Facilities Cost Estimate

Cost varies with site and use

### **SPECIAL USE FACILITY (SUF)**

#### Definition

Special use facilities have a broad range of single-purpose uses. The service area for these facilities is community-wide. Each facility is unique, and should be developed using community input.

#### Recommended Size

- Size and location of special use facilities are determined by community interests, type of facility, and land availability.

#### Recommended Uses

- Special use facilities may be sites such as downtown plazas, botanical centers, amphitheaters, and cemeteries.

#### Facilities Cost Estimate

Cost varies with site and use

### **URBAN SPACE (US)**

#### Definition

Urban space includes a broad range of remnant landscapes related to metropolitan area development including parkways, ornamental areas, medians, traffic islands and minor drainage ways.

#### Recommended Size

- The size and location of urban spaces are primarily determined by resource availability and opportunity of utilizing the resource.

#### Recommended Uses

- Urban spaces are primarily ornamental or utilitarian, with site visibility as a criterion.

#### Facilities Cost Estimate

Cost varies with site and use



## PROGRAM CLASSIFICATIONS

Like park types, recreation programs may also be classified according to their particular attributes. Program classifications and types are generally based on the age of participants, the type of activity, the time of day or time of year the program is offered, and the site where the program is offered. All programs offered by the Parks and Recreation Department are inventoried in Appendix D.

All programs offered by the Parks and Recreation Department may be categorized according to one or more of five broad classification as follows:

### **ADULT ANNUAL**

Adult Year Around programs include all recreational, educational, and athletic programs offered twelve months of the year to those over 19.

### **ADULT SEASONAL**

Adult Seasonal programs include all recreational, educational, and athletic programs offered for a limited time each year to those over 19.

### **YOUTH ANNUAL**

Youth Year Around programs include all recreational, educational and athletic programs offered twelve months of the year to those 19 and under.

### **YOUTH SEASONAL**

Youth Seasonal programs include all recreational, educational and athletic programs offered for a limited time each year to those 19 and under.

### **SPECIAL**

Special programs include any program unique to the community that is offered to special user groups city-wide.

The City offers many types of programs and each of these are classified according to the categories listed above. These classifications are noted in the inventory in Appendix D. The program types offered by the Parks and Recreation Department are as follows:

### **AFTER SCHOOL CHALLENGE PROGRAM**

The After School Challenge program (ASC) is implemented during both the traditional and year-round school year. Working with eight area school districts, ASC is offered in 146 schools. Programming is provided Monday through Friday, for a maximum of three hours per day. The program focuses on the elementary, middle school and high school youth who may not be involved in extracurricular activities or whose only alternative is to go home after school.

### **AQUATICS**

The Aquatics division is responsible for the maintenance and operation of 20 outdoor community pools and two natatoriums. Learn to swim classes, competitive swimming programs, and water aerobics classes are offered at several of the pools. Lifeguard training is also offered at the San Antonio Natatorium. Every Wednesday during the summer months, free swimming is offered to participants in the Coalition program.

## **ATHLETICS**

Municipal Athletics offers organized sports for both youth and adults. Youth activities include amateur boxing, summer track and field meets, and the girls' fast pitch tournament. Adult activities include men's and women's softball, basketball, and a softball players golf tournament. All the sports offered are league plays. In 1997, 1,540 teams participated in our Municipal Athletics Program.

Youth Athletics provides programming for young people ages 6 to 19. All activities are designed to help participants develop self-confidence, self-esteem, and an understanding of the value of team play. Activities include team 3-point shoot-out, table tennis, fishing contests and the Alamo City Shoot-Out. Activities take place in community centers and other city facilities.

## **COALITION (THE CO.)**

The City's youth membership program-- the CO.-- offers free recreational, educational and cultural activities to young people ages 6 to 19 who register at any of 391 participating sites. Sites include outside agencies, community centers, libraries and all other youth programs within the Parks and Recreation system. The CO. seeks to increase awareness of, and participation in, the many programs offered by the Department.

## **CULTURAL PROGRAM**

Cultural programming provides free arts training to young people between the ages of 6 and 19. Various classes are offered, including modern dance, Fandango and the Texas Starlite Troupe. Classes, pageants and talent shows all help to build self-esteem and confidence.

## **GOLF**

The City operates eight municipal golf courses with green fees ranging from \$14 to \$21, depending on the day. In addition, a discount card is offered that allows citizens to play at a rate of \$10 -\$12. Three PGA professionals are available to provide instruction and golfing tips. A junior golf program for area children ages 6 to 18 is offered throughout the year and includes instructional clinics, 9 and 18-hole tournaments, and other golf events.

## **MURALS PROGRAM**

The murals program allows young people to create murals and paint them on public property, thus fostering a partnership between youth and their community. This effort not only enhances neighborhoods, but helps to combat graffiti in the surrounding areas. The painting and restoration of murals, often created by former "graffiti artists," allows

young people to express their feelings and ideas, and teaches young people to appreciate their own work, as well as that of others. The mural artists learn to express their feelings and ideas along with others who are seeking to release similar feelings. These children learn to communicate and share their talent in effort to produce some amazing murals throughout the city.

## **OUTDOOR EDUCATION**

Friedrich Wilderness Park and the San Antonio Botanical Gardens offer educational opportunities for both youth and adults. Classes at the Botanical Gardens provide participants the chance to study a variety of subjects including landscaping with herbs, plants that attract butterflies, and gourd decoration. The Botanical Gardens are open seven days a week. At Friedrich Park, participants can bird watch, hike and learn about plants indigenous to the area. Friedrich Park is open six days a week. Both facilities are accessible to people with handicaps.

## **RESERVATIONS**

Interested parties can rent a City or County-owned facility through the Parks and Recreation Reservations office. For a nominal fee, an individual or group can rent a facility (i.e. ball fields, pavilions, community and civic centers, and parks) for almost any activity.

## **ROVING LEADER PROGRAM**

The Roving Leader program provides recreational and special activities in areas and neighborhoods where traditional community centers are not geographically accessible—typically low income and high crime areas. Activities taken by the Roving Leaders into these neighborhoods focus on the development of team play, self-esteem, means of handling aggression, and respectful treatment of others.

## **SENIOR CITIZENS**

The Parks and Recreation Department operates two facilities that directly target senior citizens-- Lion's Field and the Commander's House. In addition, classes for seniors are offered at 20 community centers.

Lion's Field offers a wide variety of classes, workshops and weekly game sessions for senior citizens. The center also offers many special events, games days, citywide pinochle tournaments, arts and crafts fairs, luncheons, seminars and day trips. Items hand-made by participants are sold in the gift shop and at the arts and crafts fair.

The Commander's House offers classes in various subjects including painting, stained glass, pottery, dancercise, and computers. A lunch program is offered three days a week. In partnership with area businesses, the Commander's House is able to provide additional services to its participants. Adult and senior classes are also offered at 20 of the City's 25 community centers. Classes include aerobics, arts and crafts, ceramics, karate and quilting.

## **SUMMER RECREATION**

Summer Recreation programming targets youth between the ages of 6 and 19 and is provided through the Night Owl program, Summer Nutrition program, Cool It program, and at selected Summer Sites.

The Night Owl Program is offered at 17 area high schools in seven local school districts. It provides safe evening recreation for young people and their peers under the supervision of a site leader recommended by each school.

The Summer Nutrition Program provides lunches or snacks to program participants at recreation centers, agencies, and summer sites. It is an extension of the school lunch program.

Cool-It is a program that extends the operational hours of community centers (to 9 p.m. in most cases) in order to provide a safe haven where area youth can engage in recreational activities.

Summer Sites extend the year around recreation program. Sixty-one schools from eight school districts invite the Parks and Recreation Department to use their facilities (cafeterias, libraries and fields) to provide recreation to area youth. This allows the Department to present programs in areas of the city that are not normally accessible, and in turn, allows those youth the opportunity to discover the many things which SAPAR offers.

## **TENNIS**

The City maintains two tennis centers, McFarlin and Fairchild. Both centers are open seven days a week and offer lessons, league play and tournament play. Fees vary depending on usage. McFarlin Tennis Center has 22 lighted hard courts with snack bar, pro shop, lockers and shower facilities. Lessons are available at a nominal cost, and include tennis clinics, private and semi-private lessons, and group lessons for all levels and age groups. Tournaments and leagues are available throughout the year

## **THERAPEUTIC RECREATION**

Therapeutic recreation programs are presented in two categories-- Center Based Programs and Community Based Programs.

Center Based Programs operate throughout the year at the Copernicus, Lackland Terrace and Woodlawn Community Centers, Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. The program provides adults with mental/physical disabilities the opportunity to meet new people, have social interaction, participate in recreational activities, and develop a higher level of physical fitness. Activities offered include table games, arts and crafts, bowling, and aerobic walking.

Community Based Programs promote public awareness of the various services and organizations that are available to those with mental/physical disabilities in San Antonio. Community Resources Opportunity Week (C.R.O.W.) is a joint venture with the City and agencies and businesses that provide services to people with disabilities. Activities

include a luncheon, flea market, mini family Olympics and a city-wide Halloween Dance. Garza, Garrett, and Meadowcliff Community Centers also offer wheelchair basketball to interested children and adults. The games are sponsored by the San Antonio Spurs Wheelchair Association.

### **VOLUNTEER PROGRAM**

The Volunteer Services Division provides concerned individuals and groups opportunities to assist in the clean-up and beautification of City parks. The City matches workers with selected sites (workers may also choose their own site), designs the project, and provides the tools and supplies needed for the project. All age groups are invited and encouraged to participate. Tasks include painting, trash pick up, and digging grass from playground “fall zone” areas. In FY 1998, 8,572 people participated in park clean-ups.

### **YOUTH AND ADULT RECREATION**

The City’s 25 community centers provide free recreational and educational programs throughout the year. The programs, designed to serve both youth and adults, are supervised by qualified recreation professionals. Activities include arts and crafts, ceramics, athletic activities, cultural events, dance classes, organized games, league play, and tournaments.

### **YOUTH EMPLOYMENT**

The Youth Employment Program includes three programs: District 2 CDBG Youth Work Program, City-Wide Youth Employment Program and Youth Works. In FY 98, 59 young people participated in these programs.

The District 2 CDBG Youth Work Program utilizes employees ages 16 to 19 living in District 2, to perform concentrated grounds maintenance in the City’s Historic East Side Cemetery District and other District 2 park facilities. The work is performed on a routine basis or in conjunction with Neighborhood Sweeps.

The City-Wide Youth Employment Program is the sister program to the District 2 CDBG Youth Work Program. This program is funded through the General Fund and the youth participants perform concentrated grounds maintenance in 23 parks facilities throughout the City.

Youth Works participants are responsible for routine custodial maintenance at each of the City’s 25 recreation centers. They also perform clerical duties and act as recreational aides at the community centers.